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No. 11
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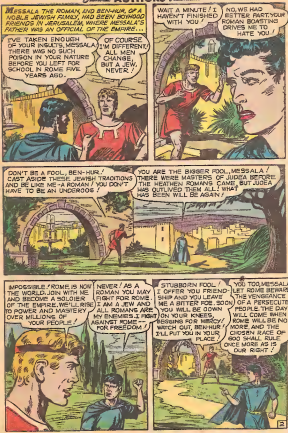
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BEN-HUR
by
LEW WALLACE
MAJOR GENERAL, U.S.ARMY
VENGEANCE WAS BEN-HUR'S GUIDING PASSION IN AN ERA ROCKED BY BRUTAL OPPRESSION AND POWER-MAD CONQUEST.
AS A PROUD AND WEALTHY PRINCE OF JERUSALEM, HE WAS JEALOUSLY PROUD OF THE HERITAGE OF HIS JEWISH RACE.
BUT HE CHAFED UNDER THE ROMAN PERSECUTION THAT HAD REDUCED HIS COUNTRY, JUDEA, FROM A PROUD KINGDOM TO A REBELLIOUS PROVINCE OF THE ROMAN CONQUERORS.
HIS STARTLING SAGA BEGINS WHEN HE, AT SEVENTEEN, DEFIED THE INSULTS AND THREATS OF A ROMAN YOUNGSTER WHO HAD BEEN HIS CLOSEST FRIEND
BUT LATER HE WAS TO RISE FROM THE LIVING HELL OF A GALLEY SLAVE TO FAME AND FORTUNE. BUT WHEN THE CRISIS CAME, BEN-HUR FOUND NEITHER POWER NOR VENGEANCE – BUT PEACE AND THE PRINCE OF PEACE.
Adapted by
DANA E. DUTCH
Illustrated by
GUSTAV SCHROTTER


MESSALA THE ROMAN, AND BEN-HUR, OF A NOBLE JEWISH FAMILY, HAD BEEN BOYHOOD FRIENDS IN JERUSALEM, WHERE MESSALA'S FATHER WAS AN OFFICIAL OF THE EMPIRE...
I'VE TAKEN ENOUGH OF YOUR INSULTS, MESSALA! THERE WAS NO SUCH POISON IN YOUR NATURE BEFORE YOU LEFT FOR SCHOOL IN ROME FIVE YEARS AGO.
OF COURSE I'M DIFFERENT! ALL MEN CHANGE, BUT A JEW, NEVER!
WAIT A MINUTE! I HAVEN'T FINISHED WITH YOU!
NO, WE HAD BETTER PART. YOUR ROMAN BOASTING DRIVES ME TO HATE YOU!
DON'T BE A FOOL, BEN-HUR! CAST ASIDE THESE JEWISH TRADITIONS AND BE LIKE ME - A ROMAN! YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN UNDERDOG!
YOU ARE THE BIGGER FOOL, MESSALA! THERE WERE MASTERS OF JUDEA BEFORE THE HEATHEN ROMANS CAME, BUT JUDEA HAS OUTLIVED THEM ALL! WHAT HAS BEEN WILL BE AGAIN!
IMPOSSIBLE! ROME IS NOW THE WORLD. JOIN WITH ME AND BECOME A SOLDIER OF THE EMPIRE. WE'LL RISE TO POWER AND MASTERY OVER MILLIONS OF YOUR PEOPLE!
NEVER! AS A ROMAN YOU MAY FIGHT FOR ROME. I AM A JEW AND ALL ROMANS ARE MY ENEMIES. I FIGHT AGAINST ROME -- FOR FREEDOM!
STUBBORN FOOL! I OFFER YOU FRIENDSHIP AND YOU LEAVE ME A BITTER FOE. SOON YOU WILL BE DOWN ON YOUR KNEES, BEGGING FOR MERCY! WATCH OUT, BEN-HUR! I'LL PUT YOU IN YOUR PLACE!
YOU TOO, MESSALA! LET ROME BEWARE THE VENGEANCE OF A PERSECUTED PEOPLE. THE DAY WILL COME WHEN ROME WILL BE NO MORE, AND THE CHOSEN RACE OF GOD SHALL RULE ONCE MORE AS IS OUR RIGHT!


SEETHING WITH NEW-BORN HATRED OF ROME AND HIS FORMER FRIEND, BEN-HUR RETURNS TO HIS MOTHER'S HOME ON JERUSALEM'S MOUNT ZION.
MY MIND IS MADE UP! I WONDER HOW MOTHER AND MY SISTER TIRZAH WILL GREET THE NEWS.
BEN-HUR FINDS HIS MOTHER AND SISTER, TIRZAH, ON THE ROOF GARDEN OF THEIR HOME.
MESSALA AND I HAD A BITTER QUARREL. HE IS ROMAN TO THE CORE, AND I HATE HIM WITH THE REST OF ROME.
TAKE CARE, BROTHER, YOU MUST BE MORE CAREFUL! YOU'LL GET US ALL IN TROUBLE!
I'M PROUD OF YOU! MY ONLY SON SHALL SOME DAY BE A LEADER OF HIS PEOPLE.
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SMASH ROMAN RULE, MOTHER. I'M GOING TO ROME AND LEARN THE ART OF WAR AS THEY TEACH IT TO A ROMAN SOLDIER.
YOU HAVE MY BLESSING, SON, IF YOU INTEND TO SERVE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL AND NOT THE EMPEROR, CAESAR AUGUSTUS. MAY THE FAITH OF YOUR FATHERS GIVE YOU COURAGE AND STRENGTH!
BUT BEN-HUR'S HOUR OF PERIL STRUCK ON THE FOLLOWING MORNING. A COLUMN OF ROMAN SOLDIERS ESCORTING THE NEW ROMAN GOVERNOR OF JERUSALEM MARCHED DOWN THE STREET BY THE HOUSE OF HUR...
3

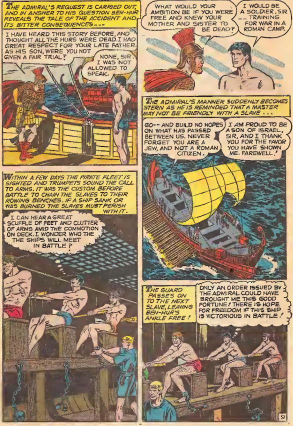

LOOK! OUR NEW ROMAN MASTER IS APPROACHING. SEE HOW ARROGANT HE LOOKS.
HEAR HOW THE PEOPLE JEER AT HIM FROM THE ROOFS AND WINDOWS! I THINK THEY'RE READY FOR REVOLT.
AS THE ROMAN GOVERNOR PASSES DIRECTLY BELOW, A LOOSE TILE SLIPS FROM UNDER THE WEIGHT OF BEN-HUR'S HAND...
WATCH OUT! WATCH OUT! BELOW!
OH, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, BROTHER! IF IT SHOULD STRIKE THE GOVERNOR---
A TILE THROWN BY ONE OF THE JEERING JEWS! IT HAS KILLED THE GOVERNOR!
UP THERE! I SAW THE ASSASSIN HURL THE TILE!
SMASH DOWN THE DOOR AND SEARCH THROUGH THE HOUSE! HE MUST NOT ESCAPE!
THEY SAW YOU, BROTHER! THEY'LL BREAK IN AND TURN THE HOUSE INTO A SHAMBLES UNTIL THEY FIND YOU. FLEE FOR YOUR LIFE.
NO, WAIT FOR ME HERE. OUR MOTHER WILL BE HURT. I CAN EXPLAIN IT WAS AN ACCIDENT IF ONLY I CAN REACH THE GOVERNOR.
4

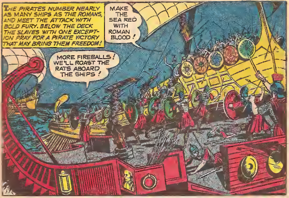

BEN-HUR'S EARS ARE ASSAILED BY CRIES AND CRASHING TIMBERS AS THE ROMAN LEGIONNAIRES SPREAD HAVOC THROUGH THE HOUSE IN THEIR GRIM SEARCH....
THE RUTHLESS BEASTS ARE STRIKING DOWN OUR SERVANTS, SHATTERING THE CHAMBER DOORS! A WOMAN'S SHRIEK! IT IS MY MOTHER!
DON'T BE AFRAID MOTHER! I COMMITTED NO ACT OF VIOLENCE. I WILL REASON WITH THEM AND THEY WILL UNDERSTAND IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
NO, MY SON! NOTHING WILL STOP THESE BRUTES! LEAVE ME TO THEIR PUNISHMENT. FLEE FOR YOUR LIFE!
MESSALA, HAS BEEN DRAWN TO THE SCENE BY THE SOLDIERS' SHOUTS, AND IS READY TO BETRAY HIS FORMER FRIEND.
WHY, THAT ONE IS ONLY A BOY! CAN HE BE THE ASSASSIN?
THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT IT! ARREST THEM ALL! I KNOW THEY ARE SWORN ENEMIES OF ROME!
HEAR THE TRUTH AND HELP ME, MESSALA! DON'T LET THEM DRAG AWAY MY MOTHER AND SISTER, I PRAY YOU!
NO, I'LL NOT STAND BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR JUST DESERT. OUR FRIENDSHIP IS DEAD, AND I AM A LOYAL ROMAN.
AS MESSALA SCORNS BEN-HUR'S PLEA AND RETURNS TO THE STREET, TIRZAH FALLS INTO THE SOLDIERS' HANDS. ALL HOPE FOR ESCAPE IS NOW LOST!
IN THE HOUR OF THY VENGEANCE, OH LORD, LET MINE BE THE HAND TO PUNISH MESSALA!

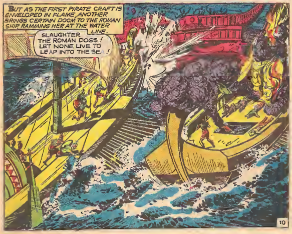

ALL OF BEN-HUR'S EFFORTS ARE IN VAIN. BEFORE HIS HORRIFIED EYES TIRZAH AND HIS MOTHER ARE TREATED NO BETTER THAN COMMON CRIMINALS...
GOD IS JUST AND WILL GIVE YOU MERCY IF YOU SPARE MY LOVED ONES LEAVE THEM HERE! I WILL BEAR THE PUNISHMENT YOU WOULD PRESS ON THEM!
DRAG THE WOMEN TO THE TOWER! BIND THE YOUNG ASSASSIN AND SEAL THIS INFAMOUS HOUSE!
THUS IN A FEW SHORT MINUTES BEN-HUR'S HAPPY YOUTH HAD COME TO A MOST DREADFUL END. HIS MOTHER AND SISTER WERE GONE, HIS HOME HAD BEEN DEFILED AND LOOTED AND HIS LIFE WAS AT THE MERCY OF THE ROMAN AUTHORITIES!
EVERYTHING IS LOST! ROME GIVES NO MERCY TO HER VICTIMS.
BEN-HUR GAVE LITTLE THOUGHT TO WHETHER HIS FATE WOULD BE TORTURE, DEATH OR SLAVERY. ALL HIS PRAYERS WERE FOR HIS MOTHER AND SISTER AS THE LEGIONNAIRES HURRIED HIM TO THE DUNGEON.
THOUGH THE FALLING TILE HAD NOT KILLED THE GOVERNOR HIS ANGER KNEW NO BOUNDS. AFTER SENTENCING THE PRISONERS SECRETLY AND WITHOUT TRIAL, HE DISPATCHED TWO SOLDIERS TO THE HOUSE OF HUR TO POST A WARNING.
THIS IS THE PROPERTY OF THE EMPEROR
THIS SHOULD TEACH THE JEWS WHO HAVE PLOTTED TO KILL THE GOVERNOR!


PART II
SLAVERY AT SEA
BEN-HUR WAS SENTENCED FOR LIFE TO THE BACKBREAKING TOIL OF A SLAVE AMONG THE LIVING DEAD WHO MANNED THE OARS ABOARD THE GALLEYS OF THE ROMAN NAVY.
ON HIS WAY TO THE NEAREST SEAPORT, HE FELL EXHAUSTED BY THE ROADSIDE. THE SOLDIERS HAD NO PITY UPON HIM, AND THE VILLAGERS DARED NOT GIVE HIM HELP.
UPON THIS SCENE CAME THE KINDLY JOSEPH, A CARPENTER FROM THE NEARBY TOWN OF NAZARETH, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS YOUTHFUL APPRENTICE - A BOY OF ABOUT BEN-HUR'S AGE.
WHEREUPON THE YOUNG MAN LAID DOWN HIS TOOLS AND, GOING TO THE WELL, TOOK FROM IT A PITCHER OF WATER. HE STOOPED TO THE PRISONER AND OFFERED HIM A DRINK. NOT A WORD WAS SAID. AND SO, FOR THE FIRST TIME, BEN-HUR AND THE SON OF MARY MET - AND PARTED.


FOR THREE LONG YEARS BEN-HUR STRAINED AT HIS OAR ABOARD THE ROMAN GALLEY. THE SLAVES, HELD TO SILENCE, LIVED A LIFE WHERE MISERY BECOMES A HABIT AND SOUL AND BODY TAKE ON AN UNBELIEVEABLE ENDURANCE...
UNKNOWN TO THE GALLEY SLAVES, THEIR SHIP WAS THE FLAGSHIP OF A GREAT ROMAN FLEET UNDER THE COMMAND OF QUINTUS ARRIUS, A RENOWNED ADMIRAL...
CAESAR HAS ORDERED ME TO DESTROY THE GREAT ARMADA OF PIRATES THAT IS PLAGUING THE TRADE ROUTES IN THE AEGEAN SEA.
UNDER OAR AND SAIL THE FLEET OF OVER A HUNDRED ROMAN SHIPS SET FORTH TO BATTLE THE DREADED SEA ROVERS IN THEIR LAIR...
ON A TOUR OF INSPECTION BEN-HUR'S POWERFUL PHYSIQUE AND THE LONG, EVEN SWEEP OF HIS OAR DREW THE ADMIRAL'S ATTENTION...
KNOWEST THOU SLAVE NUMBER SIXTY? HE IS A JEW AND VERY YOUNG. BY THE GODS, THE FELLOW IMPRESSES ME!
HE IS OUR BEST OARSMAN. I HAVE SEEN HIM BEND HIS OAR ALMOST TO BREAKING.
HE IS OBEDIENT, AND OFFERED HIS SERVICES WHENEVER THERE WAS NEED IN STORM OR BATTLE.
IF I SHOULD BE ON DECK WHEN HIS REST-TIME COMES, SEND HIM TO ME-LET HIM COME ALONE.

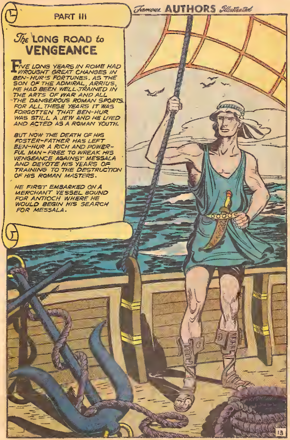

THE ADMIRAL'S REQUEST IS CARRIED OUT, AND IN ANSWER TO HIS QUESTION BEN-HUR REVEALS THE TALE OF THE ACCIDENT AND ITS BITTER CONSEQUENCES---
I HAVE HEARD THIS STORY BEFORE, AND THOUGHT ALL THE HURS WERE DEAD. I HAD GREAT RESPECT FOR YOUR LATE FATHER. AS HIS SON, WERE YOU NOT GIVEN A FAIR TRIAL?
NONE, SIR, I WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK.
WHAT WOULD YOUR AMBITION BE IF YOU WERE FREE AND KNEW YOUR MOTHER AND SISTER TO BE DEAD?
I WOULD BE A SOLDIER, SIR -- TRAINING FOR WAR IN A ROMAN CAMP.
THE ADMIRAL'S MANNER SUDDENLY BECOMES STERN AS HE IS REMINDED THAT A MASTER MAY NOT BE FRIENDLY WITH A SLAVE...
GO-- AND BUILD NO HOPES ON WHAT HAS PASSED BETWEEN US. NEVER FORGET YOU ARE A JEW, AND NOT A ROMAN CITIZEN.
I AM PROUD TO BE A SON OF ISRAEL, SIR, AND I THANK YOU FOR THE FAVOR YOU HAVE SHOWN ME. FAREWELL.!
WITHIN A FEW DAYS THE PIRATE FLEET IS SIGHTED AND TRUMPETS SOUND THE CALL TO ARMS. IT WAS THE CUSTOM BEFORE BATTLE TO CHAIN THE SLAVES TO THEIR ROWING BENCHES. IF A SHIP SANK OR WAS BURNED THE SLAVES MUST PERISH WITH IT.
I CAN HEAR A GREAT SCUFFLE OF FEET AND CLUTTER OF ARMS AMID THE COMMOTION ON DECK. I WONDER WHO THE SHIPS WILL MEET IN BATTLE?
THE GUARD PASSES ON TO THE NEXT SLAVE, LEAVING BEN-HUR'S ANKLE FREE!
ONLY AN ORDER ISSUED BY THE ADMIRAL COULD HAVE BROUGHT ME THIS GOOD FORTUNE! THERE IS HOPE FOR FREEDOM IF THIS SHIP IS VICTORIOUS IN BATTLE!


THE PIRATES NUMBER NEARLY AS MANY SHIPS AS THE ROMANS, AND MEET THE ATTACK WITH BOLD FURY. BELOW THE DECK THE SLAVES WITH ONE EXCEPTION PRAY FOR A PIRATE VICTORY THAT MAY BRING THEM FREEDOM!
MAKE THE SEA RED WITH ROMAN BLOOD!
MORE FIREBALLS! WE'LL ROAST THE RATS ABOARD THE SHIPS!


BUT AS THE FIRST PIRATE CRAFT IS ENVELOPED IN FLAME, ANOTHER BRINGS CERTAIN DOOM TO THE ROMAN SHIP RAMMING HER AT THE WATER LINE.
SLAUGHTER THE ROMAN DOGS! LET NONE LIVE TO LEAP INTO THE SEA!
10

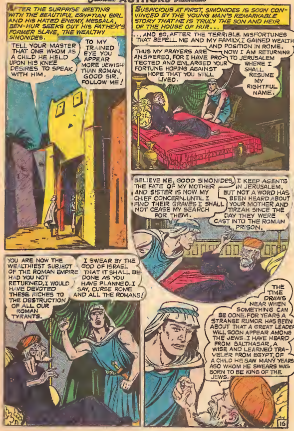

TERROR REIGNS BELOW DECK AS THE MIGHTY GALLEY FLOUNDERS! SCREAMS OF THE TRAPPED SLAVES RISE ABOVE THE ANGUISHED CRIES OF WOUNDED MARINES AS BEN-HUR STRUGGLES TO MAKE HIS WAY TO SAFETY.
I HAVE NOT A MOMENT TO SPARE! IF I AM NOT ABOVE DECK BEFORE THE VESSEL SINKS, I WILL GO WITH IT TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.
TOO LATE!
HELP! WE SHALL DROWN LIKE RATS!
NEVER! WE HAVE FOUGHT LIKE ROMANS-- SO WE SHALL DIE AS ROMANS!
DOWN WENT THE ROMAN GALLEY WITH ITS SCREAMING SLAVES, ITS VANGUISHED DEFENDERS, ITS MASTER-- THE ADMIRAL-- AND BEN-HUR!
FETCH SPEARS TO HURL AT ANYONE WHO SWIMS. DEATH TO ALL ROMANS!
BY A MIRACLE BEN-HUR FLOATS SLOWLY UP THROUGH THE OPEN HATCH AS THE GALLEY SINKS TO THE BOTTOM OF THE AEGEAN SEA.
AS BEN-HUR GASPS FOR BREATH HIS EYES ROVE THROUGH THE ACRID SMOKE OF BATTLE FOR OTHER SURVIVORS...
THERE'S A MAN! HIS STRENGTH IS GONE. I MUST REACH HIM BEFORE HE GOES UNDER!

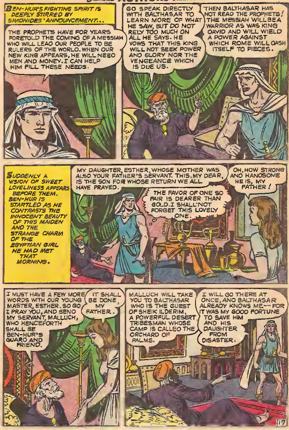

BUT BEN-HUR FAILS TO SEE APPROACHING PERIL. ANOTHER GALLEY BENT ON OVERTAKING A PIRATE SHIP WILL NOT SPARE THE LIVES OF THOSE STRUGGLING IN THE SEA.
IT'S QUINTUS ARRIUS ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET! SAVE HIM!
THE GALLEY MISSES THEM BY INCHES AS IT RUSHES ON IN PURSUIT OF THE FLEEING PIRATES. IN THE HOUR OF VICTORY THE ADMIRAL REALIZES THAT HE OWES HIS LIFE TO BEN-HUR'S STRENGTH AND COURAGE.
HERE COMES A SMALL BOAT TO RESCUE US. YOU HAVE WON A GALLANT VICTORY AND ROME WILL BESTOW HER GREATEST HONORS ON YOU.
EXCEPT FOR YOU, I WOULD NOT NOW BE ALIVE. I HAVE NO SON OF MY OWN AND HENCEFORTH YOU SHALL BEAR MY NAME.
NO, YOU CANNOT MAKE A ROMAN OF ME! I AM A JEW AND MY LOYALTY MUST REMAIN WITH ISRAEL AND THE GOD OF MOSES.
YOU WILL SHARE MY POSITION AND MY FORTUNE, AND FROM NOW ON, NO ONE WILL DARE HARM YOU.
BEN-HUR REALIZES THAT THIS GENEROUS OFFER WILL BRING HIM THE MEANS TO WREAK VENGEANCE ON MESSALA AND THE ROMAN OPPRESSORS OF HIS PEOPLE.
I WILL DO AS HE ASKS AND BECOME HIS ADOPTED SON, BUT IN MY HEART I WILL REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE ONE AND TRUE GOD AND SEEK FREEDOM FOR MY COUNTRY.
AND SO THE WISH OF QUINTUS ARRIUS WAS FULFILLED ON HIS VICTORIOUS RETURN TO THE ROMAN NAVAL BASE.
FOR SAVING MY LIFE I HAVE MADE THIS BRAVE FELLOW MY SON AND HEIR. FROM NOW ON HE SHALL BE KNOWN ONLY BY MY NAME.
WE SHALL AFFORD HIM THE SAME HONOR AND RESPECT AS WE GIVE YOU, NOBLE ARRIUS!
12


PART III
The LONG ROAD to VENGEANCE
FIVE LONG YEARS IN ROME HAD WROUGHT GREAT CHANGES IN BEN-HUR'S FORTUNES. AS THE SON OF THE ADMIRAL, ARRIUS, HE HAD BEEN WELL TRAINED IN THE ARTS OF WAR AND ALL THE DANGEROUS ROMAN SPORTS. FOR ALL THESE YEARS IT WAS FORGOTTEN THAT BEN-HUR WAS STILL A JEW AND HE LIVED AND ACTED AS A ROMAN YOUTH.
BUT NOW THE DEATH OF HIS FOSTER-FATHER HAS LEFT BEN-HUR A RICH AND POWERFUL MAN - FREE TO WREAK HIS VENGEANCE AGAINST MESSALA AND DEVOTE HIS YEARS OF TRAINING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS ROMAN MASTERS.
HE FIRST EMBARKED ON A MERCHANT VESSEL BOUND FOR ANTIOCH WHERE HE WOULD BEGIN HIS SEARCH FOR MESSALA.


BEN-HUR'S CURIOSITY IS AROUSED AS THE SHIP SAILS INTO THE HARBOR AT ANTIOCH---
CAPTAIN--WHOSE ARE THOSE VESSELS THAT FLY THE BRIGHT YELLOW PENNANT?
THEY BELONG TO SIMONIDES, A FABULOUSLY RICH MERCHANT. HE BEARS A GREEK NAME ALTHOUGH HE IS A JEW AND WAS ONCE A SLAVE OF THE ANCIENT FAMILY OF HUR.
WHAT? CAN SUCH BE TRUE? DO SLAVES NOW RISE TO RIVAL THE FORTUNES OF THEIR MASTERS?
SOON AFTER HIS MASTER DIED, THE FAMILY DISAPPEARED BECAUSE THE YOUNG SON WAS CAUGHT IN AN ATTEMPT TO MURDER THE ROMAN GOVERNOR.
BUT IN SUCH A CASE, THE ROMANS MUST HAVE SEIZEO ALL THE FAMILY'S WEALTH AND PROPERTY.
SIMONIOES IS A CLEVER MAN. HE WAS AGENT FOR THE HURS HERE IN ANTIOCH AND HIO MANY SHIPS AND CARGOES FROM THE ROMANS. TWICE THEY TORTURED HIM BUT COULD LEARN NOTHING.
YEA, AND 'TIS SAID SIMONIDES VERILY HAS THE GOLDEN TOUCH. IN EIGHT YEARS HE HAS DOUBLED AND REDOUBLED HIS FORTUNE MANY TIMES.
AN ASTDUNDING TALE! I THANK YOU FOR THE TELLING, CAPTAIN!
I MUST MAKE HASTE ASHORE TO SEEK OUT SIMONIOES. HE MAY STILL BE LOYAL AND HAVE GUARDEO ALL THIS WEALTH FOR ME. AND HE WILL KNOW THE FATE OF MY MOTHER ANO SISTER!
14


NO SOONER ASHORE AT ANTIOCH, THAN BEN-HUR FINDS DANGERS AND ROMANCE BOTH AWAITING HIM.
LOOK OUT! THAT CHARIOT WILL RUN YOU DOWN!
DOG OF A ROMAN! CAREST THOU SO LITTLE FOR THE LIVES OF OTHERS?
MY DEEPEST GRATITUDE, BRAVE STRANGER. I AM BALTHASAR FROM THE KINGDOM OF EGYPT, AND THIS IS MY DAUGHTER IRAS.
STRANGE FORTUNE FATHER! ONE NOBLE YOUTH WOULD HAVE KILLED US BUT FOR THE COURAGE OF ANOTHER.
BY THE GODS YOU ARE A PRINCESS OF BEAUTY. MAY I BE PARDONED FOR MY RASH ACT?
THAT WAS THE GREAT MESSALA WHOM THOU DIDST CURSE SO ROUNDLY.
THEN, GRACIOUS LADY, STRANGE AS IT SEEMS, IN THIS SAME MOMENT I HAVE MET THE MAN I HATE AND A WOMAN THAT COULD WIN MY HEART!

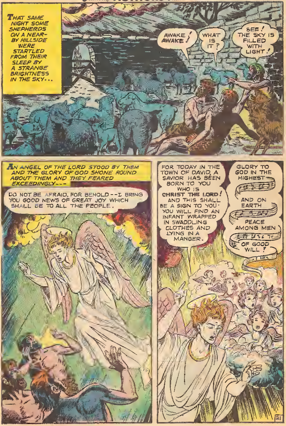

AFTER THE SURPRISE MEETING WITH THE BEAUTIFUL EGYPTIAN GIRL AND HIS HATED ENEMY, MESSALA, BEN-HUR SEEKS OUT HIS FATHER'S FORMER SLAVE, THE WEALTHY SIMONIDES.
TELL YOUR MASTER THAT ONE WHOM AS A CHILD HE HELD UPON HIS KNEE DESIRES TO SPEAK WITH HIM.
TO MY TRAINED EYE YOU APPEAR MORE JEWISH THAN ROMAN, GOOD SIR. FOLLOW ME!
SUSPICIOUS AT FIRST, SIMONIDES IS SOON CONVINCED BY THE YOUNG MAN'S REMARKABLE STORY THAT HE IS TRULY THE SON AND HEIR OF THE HOUSE OF HUR...
...AND SO, AFTER THE TERRIBLE MISFORTUNES THAT BEFELL ME AND MY FAMILY, I GAINED WEALTH AND POSITION IN ROME. NOW I AM RETURNING TO JERUSALEM WHERE I SHALL RESUME MY RIGHTFUL NAME.
THUS MY PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED, FOR I HAVE PROTECTED AND ENLARGED YOUR FORTUNE HOPING AGAINST HOPE THAT YOU STILL LIVED.
BELIEVE ME, GOOD SIMONIDES, THE FATE OF MY MOTHER AND SISTER IS NOW MY CHIEF CONCERN. UNTIL I FIND THEIR GRAVES I SHALL NOT CEASE MY SEARCH FOR THEM.
I KEEP AGENTS IN JERUSALEM, BUT NOT A WORD HAS BEEN HEARD ABOUT YOUR MOTHER AND TIRZAH SINCE THE DAY THEY WERE CAST INTO THE ROMAN PRISON.
YOU ARE NOW THE WEALTHIEST SUBJECT OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. HAD YOU NOT RETURNED, I WOULD HAVE DEVOTED THESE RICHES TO THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL OUR ROMAN TYRANTS.
I SWEAR BY THE GOD OF ISRAEL THAT IT SHALL BE DONE AS YOU HAVE PLANNED. I SAY, CURSE ROME AND ALL THE ROMANS!
THE TIME DRAWS NEAR WHEN SOMETHING CAN BE DONE. FOR YEARS A STRANGE RUMOR HAS BEEN ABOUT THAT A GREAT LEADER WILL SOON APPEAR AMONG THE JEWS. I HAVE HEARD FROM BALTHASAR, A WISE AND LEARNED TRAVELER FROM EGYPT, OF A CHILD HE SAW MANY YEARS AGO WHOM HE SWEARS WAS BORN TO BE KING OF THE JEWS.


BEN-HUR'S FIGHTING SPIRIT IS DEEPLY STIRRED BY SIMONIDES' ANNOUNCEMENT...
THE PROPHETS HAVE FOR YEARS FORETOLD THE COMING OF A MESSIAH WHO WILL LEAD OUR PEOPLE TO BE RULERS OF THE WORLD. WHEN OUR NEW KING APPEARS, HE WILL NEED MEN AND MONEY. I CAN HELP HIM FILL THESE NEEDS.
GO SPEAK DIRECTLY WITH BALTHASAR TO LEARN MORE OF WHAT HE SAW, BUT DO NOT RELY TOO MUCH ON ALL HE SAYS. HE VOWS THAT THIS KING WILL NOT SEEK POWER AND GLORY NOR THE VENGEANCE WHICH IS DUE US.
THEN BALTHASAR HAS NOT READ THE PROPHETS! THE MESSIAH WILL BE A WARRIOR AS WAS KING DAVID AND WILL WIELD A POWER AGAINST WHICH ROME WILL DASH ITSELF TO PIECES.
SUDDENLY A VISION OF SWEET LOVELINESS APPEARS BEFORE THEM. BEN-HUR IS STARTLED AS HE CONTRASTS THE INNOCENT BEAUTY OF THIS MAIDEN AND THE STRANGE CHARM OF THE EGYPTIAN GIRL HE HAD MET THAT MORNING.
MY DAUGHTER, ESTHER, WHOSE MOTHER WAS ALSO YOUR FATHER'S SERVANT. THIS, MY DEAR, IS THE SON FOR WHOSE RETURN WE ALL HAVE PRAYED.
THE FAVOR OF ONE SO FAIR IS DEARER THAN GOLD. I SHALL NOT FORGET THIS LOVELY ONE.
OH, HOW STRONG AND HANDSOME HE IS, MY FATHER!
I MUST HAVE A FEW MORE WORDS WITH OUR YOUNG MASTER, ESTHER. SO GO I PRAY YOU, AND SEND MY SERVANT, MALLUCH, WHO HENCEFORTH SHALL BE BEN-HUR'S GUARD AND FRIEND.
IT SHALL BE DONE, MY FATHER.
MALLUCH WILL TAKE YOU TO BALTHASAR WHO IS THE GUEST OF SHEIK ILDERIM, A POWERFUL DESERT TRIBESMAN WHOSE CAMP IS CALLED THE ORCHARD OF PALMS.
I WILL GO THERE AT ONCE, AND BALTHASAR ALREADY KNOWS ME-- FOR IT WAS MY GOOD FORTUNE TO SAVE HIM AND HIS DAUGHTER FROM DISASTER.


JOINED BY SIMONIDES' SERVANT, MALLUCH, BEN-HUR RIDES FORTH FROM THE CITY TO THE STRONGHOLD OF SHEIK ILDERIM---
BEHOLD THE ORCHARD OF THE PALMS, ANCESTRAL HOME OF THE GREAT SHEIK. THE ROMANS HAVE ALREADY SEIZED MANY OF HIS POSSESSIONS AND EVEN NOW ARE PLOTTING TO DESPOIL HIM OF HIS NOBLE HORSES.
HE THEN SHARES MY HATRED OF THE ROMANS. LET US ENTER HIS CAMP.
HEARING THAT BEN-HUR IS A SWORN ENEMY OF ROME, THE SHEIK COMES FROM HIS TENT TO WELCOME HIM---
COME YOUNG MAN, AND SUP WITH ME. MALLUCH TELLS ME YOU HAVE SUFFERED MUCH FROM OUR ROMAN ENEMIES.
IT IS BALTHASAR, YOUR GUEST, WHOM I SEEK-- BUT I CANNOT REFUSE YOUR GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY.
WHEN SHEIK ILDERIM HAS OBSERVED BEN-HUR'S GREAT STRENGTH GAINED IN THE GALLEYS AND HEARD OF HIS TRAINING AT THE GAMES IN ROME, HE PROPOSES THAT THE YOUNG MAN BE THE DRIVER OF HIS CHARIOT IN THE COMING RACES AT THE STADIUM---
HO! HOW THE ROMANS WOULD CHAFE IF THEIR FAVORITE DRIVER, MESSALA, WERE BEATEN BY A JEW! MY HORSES ARE THE FASTEST IN THE WORLD--- BUT MOST DIFFICULT TO CONTROL. YOU ALONE, OF ALL THE MEN I KNOW, COULD DRIVE THEM TO A VICTORY.
NO SWEETER VENGEANCE COULD BE MINE THAN TO HUMBLE THE PROUD MESSALA BEFORE FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE!
BE NOT TOO CONFIDENT AND WATCH OUT FOR MESSALA! HE IS A TREACHEROUS, MERCILESS DRIVER. YOU WILL NEED ALL THE SKILL AT YOUR COMMAND TO BEAT HIM!
TOMORROW WE SHALL LAY OUR PLANS BUT NOW, I PRAY, LET US GO AND SEE BALTHASAR.


THE SHEIK LEADS BEN-HUR PAST MANY TENTS AND PADDOCKS OF FINE ARABIAN STEEDS TO THE TENT OF BALTHASAR, THE EGYPTIAN...
GREETINGS, OH WISE BALTHASAR! THE MEMORY OF THE FAVOR THAT I DID FOR YOU THIS MORNING MAKES IT EASIER FOR ME TO ASK A GREATER ONE OF YOU.
SURELY IT WAS THE LORD WHO SENT THEE TO SAVE MY DAUGHTER AND MYSELF. IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT I GRANT THEE ANYTHING THOU MAY ASK.
THE GOOD SIMONIDES HAS TOLD ME OF YOUR WONDROUS TALE, AND I COME TO BEG THAT I MAY HEAR IT.
MALLUCH, THY SERVANT, HAS ALREADY SAID THAT YOU HAVE GOOD REASON TO HEAR ALL I HAVE TO TELL. COME LET US WITHDRAW TO THE SHELTER OF MY TENT.
T'WAS IN THE DESERT OF THINE OWN COUNTRY OF JUDEA IN THE EARLY WINTER 29 YEARS AGO, THAT ALONE AND UNARMED I HAD MADE THE JOURNEY FROM MY HOME IN FAR-OFF EGYPT. WARNED BY A HEAVENLY DREAM, I AWAITED THERE TWO WISE MEN FROM DISTANT LANDS---
BUT, NO! I SHALL NOT TELL YOU OF MYSELF. LET ME RATHER RELATE THE STORY IN THE MANNER THAT IT WILL SOME DAY BE WRITTEN DOWN TO BE READ BY MILLIONS STILL UNBORN.


BALTHASAR'S STORY
ONE COLD DECEMBER NIGHT TWO TRAVELERS SOUGHT SHELTER IN THE LITTLE TOWN CALLED BETHLEHEM, A FEW MILES FROM THE ANCIENT CITY OF JERUSALEM. JOSEPH, A HUMBLE CARPENTER AND HIS WIFE MARY HAD COME UP FROM GALILEE, OUT OF THE TOWN OF NAZARETH, TO JUDEA. THENCE ALONG THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM, WHERE THEY WERE OBLIGED TO COME TO BE COUNTED IN THE CENSUS ORDERED BY THE ROMAN EMPEROR.
JOSEPH'S HEART SANK AS HE LED MARY INTO A COURT YARD BEFORE AN INN ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TOWN. FOR THE INN AND THE HOUSES WERE FULL, AND JOSEPH FEARED THAT MARY AND A CHILD, SOON TO BE BORN, WOULD PERISH IF HE COULD PROVIDE NO SHELTER FOR THEM.
BUT THE INNKEEPER TOOK PITY ON THE NAZARENE AND HIS YOUNG WIFE..
THOUGH I CANNOT MAKE ROOM FOR YOU IN THE INN, I WILL HELP YOU ALL I CAN. MY HOUSE IS BUILT AGAINST THE MOUTH OF A CAVE WHERE OUR CATTLE ARE LODGED. IN THERE YOU WILL FIND WARMTH FOR THE NIGHT. HASTEN WITHIN.
I GIVE YOU THE BLESSING OF THE HOMELESS TRAVELER.
20


THAT SAME NIGHT SOME SHEPHERDS ON A NEAR-BY HILLSIDE WERE STARTLED FROM THEIR SLEEP BY A STRANGE BRIGHTNESS IN THE SKY...
AWAKE! AWAKE!
WHAT IS IT?
SEE! THE SKY IS FILLED WITH LIGHT!
AN ANGEL OF THE LORD STOOD BY THEM AND THE GLORY OF GOD SHONE ROUND ABOUT THEM AND THEY FEARED EXCEEDINGLY---
DO NOT BE AFRAID, FOR BEHOLD --I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL THE PEOPLE.
FOR TODAY IN THE TOWN OF DAVID, A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD! AND THIS SHALL BE A SIGN TO YOU: YOU WILL FIND AN INFANT WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES AND LYING IN A MANGER.
GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST
AND ON EARTH
PEACE AMONG MEN
OF GOOD WILL!
21


AS THE HEAVENLY HOST DISAPPEARED, THE SHEPHERDS WAITED NOT AN INSTANT---


AND THE SHEPHERDS FOUND ALL THINGS AS THE ANGEL TOLD THEM - MARY AND JOSEPH AND THE INFANT LYING IN THE MANGER, AND SEEING, THEY UNDERSTOOD AND RETURNED TO THEIR FLOCKS, GLORIFYING AND PRAISING GOD. BUT MARY KEPT IN MIND ALL THESE THINGS, PONDERING THEM IN HER HEART---
IT IS THE CHRIST!
OUR SAVIOR!
IT IS THE LORD, AND HIS GLORY IS ABOVE HEAVEN AND EARTH!


FOR MANY WEEKS A STAR OF STARTLING BRIGHTNESS HAD MOVED ACROSS THE HEAVENS, GUIDING THREE WISE AND HOLY MEN ON THEIR JOURNEY FROM FAR DISTANT LANDS. URGED ON BY A REVELATION FROM GOD, THEY TOO FOUND THAT THEIR COURSE BROUGHT THEM NEAR JERUSALEM.
THEN AT LAST THE STAR STOOD STILL IN THE SKY AND THE WISE MEN KNEW THAT THEIR JOURNEY HAD NEARED ITS END.
ELEVEN DAYS AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE CHRIST CHILD, THE THREE WISE MEN, COMING IN SEARCH OF HIM, PASSED THROUGH THE DAMASCUS GATE TO JERUSALEM---
WHO ARE THESE MEN THAT RIDE SUCH FINE CAMELS?
THEY ARE STRANGERS TO OUR CITY. BUT MARK HOW THEY LOOK UPON US! WHAT CAN THEY BE SEEING?
ONE OF THE REMARKABLE TRAVELERS STARTLED THE PEOPLE WITH HIS FORTHRIGHT QUESTION---
WHERE IS HE THAT IS BORN KING OF THE JEWS?
WHO?
WE HAVE NOT HEARD OF HIM.
REPEATING THEIR QUESTION THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND RECEIVING NO ANSWER, THE WISE MEN WERE SUMMONED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE CRAFTY KING HEROD WHO FEARED THAT SOME NEW RULER HAD APPEARED WHO WOULD REPLACE HIM ON HIS THRONE.
IF THE MESSIAH IS TRULY COME, THE PROPHECIES REVEAL THAT HE WILL BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM. GO THEN AND SEARCH DILIGENTLY FOR THE CHILD AND REPORT BACK TO ME AT ONCE WHAT YOU HAVE FOUND.
I WILL KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH ANY NEW BORN KING IF THESE FOOLS CAN FIND HIM.

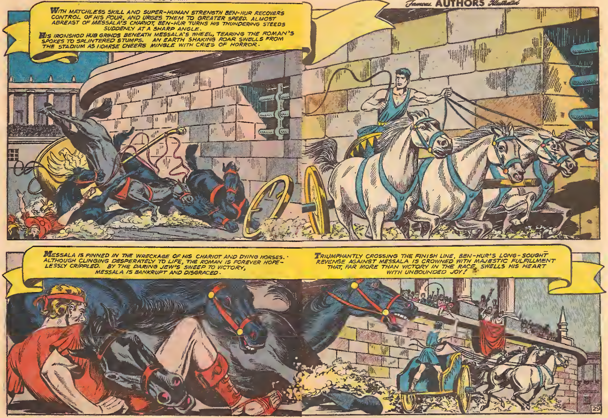

IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD WATCH WHEN THE WISE MEN REACHED THE LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM. THE STAR THEY HAD FOLLOWED FOR SO MANY WEEKS SHONE WITH STEADY BRIGHTNESS DIRECTLY ABOVE THE INN.
YES, A CHILD, NEWLY BORN, IS HERE. HE IS YONDER IN THE MANGER--- BUT WHY---
BRING US TO HIM!
WE HAVE FOUND THE REDEEMER OF THE WORLD! BLESSED, BLESSED ARE WE ABOVE MEN!
DOING HOMAGE BEFORE THE MOTHER AND THE CHILD, THE WISE MEN TENDERED GIFTS OF GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.
IN ANSWER TO A HEAVENLY MESSAGE, THE WISE MEN DID NOT REPORT THEIR DISCOVERY TO THE SCHEMING AND TYRANNICAL HEROD, BUT AVOIDING HIM HURRIED HOME TO THEIR OWN COUNTRIES BY ANOTHER ROUTE.


BEN-HUR IS SO OVERWHELMED BY BALTHASAR'S STORY THAT HE FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO PUT HIS THOUGHTS INTO WORDS.
THEN YOU, BALTHASAR, WERE ONE OF THE THREE WISE MEN WHO MADE THE JOURNEY TO THE INN IN BETHLEHEM!
IT WAS AT GODS COMMAND SINCE THEN NINE AND TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED. WHOM I FIRST SAW AS A CHILD MUST NOW BE NEARLY READY TO CARRY OUT HIS DIVINE MISSION.
AH, THIS NEW KING WILL HERALD THE THE DOWNFALL OF ROME. AT LAST THE JEWS SHALL TRIUMPH IN LONG-SOUGHT REVENGE.
EXALT NOT POWER AND VENGEANCE, MY SON, FOR I SAY THIS CHILD CAME NOT TO CONQUER BY FORCE OF ARMS. HE WILL BE KING OF MEN'S SOULS, DRAWING THEM TO HIM BY LOVE AND FORGIVENESS.
NAY, THE PROPHETS HAVE REVEALED THAT WHEN OUR MESSIAH COMES HE SHALL TRULY BE KING OF THE JEWS ---OUR CAESAR! UNDER HIS BANNERS WE SHALL CONQUER THE WORLD!
THAT CANNOT BE, FOR WE UNDERSTOOD THAT HE WAS TO BE NOT ONLY A SAVIOR OF THE JEWS, BUT OF ALL MANKIND AS WELL.
YOU WERE TOLD NO MORE THAN TO SEARCH FOR HIM WHO IS TO BE KING OF THE JEWS. I BELIEVE HE WILL BE KING, AND THEREFORE HE WILL ACT AS A KING!
BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE TIME IS NEAR AT HAND WHEN ALL OF US MUST HELP HIM!
HE WILL NEED SOLDIERS AND ARMS WHICH MY WEALTH CAN COMMAND. WHEN I HAVE WON OVER MESSALA IN THE RACE, I AM RESOLVED TO RETURN TO MY HOMELAND AND OFFER MYSELF AND ALL THAT IS MINE TO THE MESSIAH.
25


BEN-HUR IS NOW MORE RESOLVED THAN EVER TO DEFEAT MESSALA IN THE GREAT CHARIOT RACE. WITH MALLUCH, HE INSPECTS SHEIK ILDERIM'S MARVELOUS STEEDS...
IT HAS COME TO MY EARS THAT MESSALA IS WAGERING HIS ENTIRE FORTUNE ON THE RACE, BUT MY FOUR FINEST WILL CARRY YOU TO VICTORY.
I SHALL PRACTICE WITH THEM TO BE READY. NOW, MALLUCH, TO YOU FALLS A TASK OF UTMOST SECRECY.
SEEK TO MEASURE THE EXACT HEIGHT OF THE WHEEL HUBS OF MESSALA'S CHARIOT, AND I SHALL HAVE MINE MADE SLIGHTLY LOWER. IF IN THE RACE MESSALA LEANS ON TREACHERY, I WILL KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM
AS THE DAY DRAWS NEAR FOR THE RACE, BEN-HUR HAS MADE EVERY PREPARATION. HIS ONLY DISTRACTION IS IRAS, THE DAUGHTER OF BALTHASAR, WHOSE STRANGE ALLURE LEADS HIM TO FORGET THE SHY AND LOVELY ESTHER.
THE BEAUTIFUL EGYPTIAN IS WAITING FOR ME AGAIN. AFTER THIS RUN I SHALL GO TO HER.
YOU WILL BE A WORTHY RIVAL FOR MESSALA. ALTHOUGH HE IS DEEMED AS HANDSOME AS THE GOD APOLLO, DO NOT FORGET THAT HIS STRENGTH AND SKILL SURPASS HIS CHARM.
AT TIMES, SWEET IRAS, YOU SEEM TO FAVOR ME AND THEN AGAIN I THINK YOU WOULD NOT BE TOO UNHAPPY IF YOUR FRIEND MESSALA SHOULD COME OUT VICTOR.
HOW CAN YOU DOUBT ME? MY FATHER HAS TOLD ME THAT A LIFE OF FAME AND GLORY LIES AHEAD FOR YOU AND ALL YOUR FRIENDS.
WHATEVER THE FUTURE MAY HOLD REMEMBER I AM NOT IN THIS RACE FOR VICTORY ALONE. VENGEANCE RIDES IN THE CHARIOT WITH ME LET MESSALA BEWARE.
28


ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND CHEERING SPECTATORS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE CROWD THE STADIUM AT ANTIOCH ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE GREAT RACE.
BY ALL ODDS, MESSALA IS THE FAVORITE DRIVER-- BUT THERE IS MUCH SPECULATION ABOUT THE MYSTERIOUS JEW CALLED BEN-HUR AND HIS MAGNIFICENT ARABIAN HORSES.
THE SPORT OF CHARIOT RACING IS FULL OF DANGERS AND SURPRISES, FOR ONCE PAST THE LINE THERE ARE NO RULES TO RESTRAIN THE CRUELTY AND RUTHLESSNESS OF THE DRIVER.
A BLARE OF TRUMPETS, A SIGNAL FROM THE STARTER AND THE THRILLING CONTEST BEGINS! BEN-HUR HAS DRAWN THE LEAST FAVORED POSITION AND MESSALA HAS THE BEST. BUT THIS ONLY SHARPENS BEN-HUR'S GRIM DETERMINATION TO BRING CRUSHING DEFEAT TO HIS SWORN ENEMY!
AS THE TEAMS THUNDER DOWN THE COURSE ONE CHARIOT HAS BEEN FORCED AGAINST THE INNER WALL. THE UNFORTUNATE DRIVER IS HURLED UNDER THE HOOVES OF HIS MADLY PLUNGING HORSES. BEN-HUR BEHIND AND THE TWO DRIVERS NEAREST TO HIM CHECK THEIR SPEED TO AVOID CRASHING INTO THE WRECK.
BY SKILLFUL DRIVING BEN-HUR HAS MANEUVRED HIS FOUR ABREAST OF MESSALA, BUT AT THE POINT OF PASSING, THE ROMAN DEALS BEN-HUR'S HORSES A VICIOUS BLOW WITH HIS WHIP.
THE ARABIANS HAVE NEVER BEFORE FELT THE STING OF A LASH, AND ARE THROWN INTO A PANIC OF TERROR!

Famous AUTHORS Illustrated




HUMBLE AND SILENT, BEN-HUR ACCEPTS THE CROWN OF LAUREL AND THE TRIBUTE OF THE ROMAN CONSUL.
THE STADIUM STILL RINGS WITH CHEERS IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE FAVORITE HAS BEEN DEFEATED.-
REFUSING ALL THE REWARDS OF VICTORY BEN-HUR HASTENS TO LEAVE THE STADIUM WITH HIS GOOD AND FAITHFUL FRIENDS. FROM SHEIK ILDERIM COMES WORD OF WARNING.
YOU MUST GUARD AGAINST TREACHERY WHICH MESSALA WILL INSPIRE AGAINST YOU. HIS FRIENDS WILL SEEK TO KILL YOU FOR THE HUMILIATION YOU HAVE BROUGHT UPON HIM!
FROM THIS DAY ON MY LIFE BELONGS TO HIM WHO WILL BE OUR KING.
BEWARE, FOR MESSALA KNOWS NOW THAT YOU ARE THE SON OF HUR. HE WILL SEEK TO HAVE THE ROMAN GOVERNOR SEND YOU BACK TO THE GALLEYS.
THE VENGEANCE I WREAKED UPON MESSALA IS BUT A TASTE OF WHAT AWAITS ALL ROMANS WHEN OUR KING IS READY
I LEAVE THIS NIGHT FOR JERUSALEM WHERE I SHALL KEEP MY NAME AND PURPOSE A CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET.
I WILL JOIN YOU WHEN YOU SEND WORD THAT YOU HAVE FOUND OUR KING!
NOW THAT MESSALA HAS LOST, I MUST TRY TO BEGUILE THIS JEW SO I MAY SHARE HIS FORTUNE AND THE FAME HE WILL GAIN WITH HIS NEW KING.


Famous AUTHORS Illustrated
PART IV
BEN-HUR and the CHRIST
EVEN AS BEN-HUR GOES TO JERUSALEM, THE PEOPLE OF THAT DISTANT CITY ARE STARTLED BY A SUDDEN PROCLAMATION---
READ IT TO US AARON!
HENCEFORTH PONTIUS PILATE SHALL RULE AS GOVERNOR OF JERUSALEM. BY ORDER OF THE EMPEROR: AUGUSTUS CAESAR.
PONTIUS PILATE
IN SPITE OF HIS CRUEL NATURE, THE FIRST ORDER OF PONTIUS PILATE IS CALCULATED TO WIN HIM POPULAR APPROVAL AND SUPPORT.
INSPECT ALL PRISONS AND DUNGEONS. I DECREE THAT ALL WHO HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED WITHOUT TRIAL SHALL BE FREE.
AS THE ORDER IS CARRIED OUT, OFFICERS EXAMINING ONE PRISON ARE FACED WITH A SPECIAL TASK---
EIGHT YEARS AGO TWO PRISONERS WERE SEALED BEHIND THIS WALL, RECEIVING FOOD AND WATER TROUGH THIS HOLE. GRATUS, THEN GOVERNOR, HOPED THEY WOULD DIE AND BE FORGOTTEN.
FAINT WHIMPERING REVEALS THEY ARE STILL ALIVE! BREAK DOWN THE WALL AND RELEASE THEM.
THE OFFICERS ARE AGHAST AS A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER EMERGE FROM THE WALLED UP TOMB. THEIR FRIGHTFUL APPEARANCE BETRAYS THEY ARE ---
LEPERS! WHY ARE YOU HERE, AND HOW DID YOU BECOME UNCLEAN?
WE WERE JAILED WITHOUT TRIAL BY GRATUS. OUR CELL WAS INFECTED BY THE PLAGUE.
BUT FREEDOM CURSES THEM WITH A FATE ALMOST AS TERRIBLE AS ENTOMBMENT. BY LAW ALL LEPERS ARE CONDEMNED TO LIVE IN LONELY CAVES OUTSIDE THE CITY, AND TO SHOUT A WARNING WHEN ANYONE APPROACHES.
BE GONE FROM THE CITY AND TOUCH NOT THE FOOD OR CLOTHES OF THOSE NOT PLAGUED BY YOUR DISEASE!
UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN!
UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN!
31


BUT PILATE'S NEXT ORDER – SEIZURE OF THE TEMPLE'S TREASURY – AROUSES THE JEWISH POPULACE TO INDIGNANT FURY. THUS WHEN BEN-HUR ARRIVES IN JERUSALEM A FEW DAYS LATER, HE FINDS THE CITY IN A STATE OF RIOT!
I SEE YOU ARE MEN OF MY OWN RACE FROM GALILEE. WHAT HAS INCURRED YOUR WRATH?
PILATE HAS TAKEN THE TREASURE OF OUR TEMPLE TO PAY FOR PUBLIC WORKS. WHEN WE MARCHED TO HIS PALACE IN PROTEST, HE SET HIS DOGS OF ROMAN SOLDIERS UPON US!
WE LACK ARMS AND HAVE NO LEADER TRAINED IN THE WAYS OF WAR.
WOULD YOU ACCEPT A TRUE SON OF JUDEA AS YOUR LEADER --- IF HE CAN PROVE HIS SKILL IN ARMS AND PROVIDE THE FUNDS YOU NEED TO RAISE AND TRAIN AN ARMY?
WE CANNOT FIGHT THE LEGIONNAIRES OF ROME WITH OUR BARE FISTS. IF YOU ARE SUCH A MAN AS YOU HAVE DESCRIBED JOIN US TO-NIGHT AT OUR CAMP OUTSIDE THE CITY!
LATER THAT NIGHT, BEN-HUR REVEALS HIS LIFE STORY TO THE GALILEANS, AND PROMISES TO SUPPLY THE FUNDS AND LEADERSHIP NECESSARY TO MOLD THEIR HELPLESS BAND INTO A TRAINED AND POWERFUL FORCE...
THEN, ALL IS AGREED. I WILL JOIN YOUR MEN AT BETHANY AND THERE TELL YOU OF THE KING OF THE JEWS UNDER WHOSE BANNER WE SHALL MARCH TO VICTORY!
GOD KNOWS WE LACK NEITHER HOPE NOR COURAGE. WITH WEAPONS AND TRAINING WE SHALL BE ABLE TO PURGE ALL ISRAEL OF OUR ROMAN OPPRESSORS!

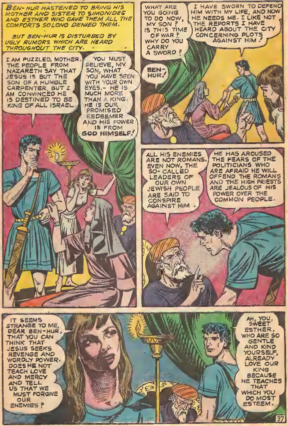

AND SO, TO PREPARE FOR THE COMING OF THE KING, BEN-HUR SWIFTLY RAISES AND TRAINS AN ARMY OF GALILEANS, USING HIS OWN WEALTH TO ARM AND FEED THE SOLDIERS. ONLY A FEW MONTHS HAVE PASSED WHEN EXCITING NEWS REACHES THE CAMP.
A STRANGE MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF JOHN THE BAPTIST HAS COME FORTH FROM THE WILDERNESS AND PREACHES THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND. EVEN NOW HE IS ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER JORDAN BAPTIZING ALL WHO BELIEVE HIM.
THIS IS SURELY THE HERALD ANNOUNCING THE ARRIVAL OF OUR NEW KING. I WILL GO TO HIM AT ONCE.
BEN-HUR'S FIRST MOVE IS TO RUSH A MESSENGER TO ANTIOCH TELLING SIMONIDES TO JOIN HIM AT ONCE IN JERUSALEM ---
BE SWIFT TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO SIMONIDES. WAIT TO BRING A REPLY. BUT WHEN YOU RETURN, YOU WILL FIND ME SOMEWHERE ALONG THE BANKS OF THE JORDAN.
BEN-HUR TRAVELS ALONE AND ON FOOT. AS HE APPROACHES A FORD IN THE RIVER HE IS SURPRISED TO COME UPON BALTHASAR AND HIS DAUGHTER IRAS.
NEWS OF THE HERALD MUST HAVE REACHED YOU ALSO. LET US TRAVEL ONWARD TOGETHER.
THIS MEETING WITH YOU IS MOST WELCOME TO US, BEN-HUR. COME WITH US, THE JORDAN MUST NOT BE FAR.
AS BEFORE, THE EGYPTIAN GIRL QUICKLY WINS BEN-HUR'S FAVOR WITH HER EXOTIC CHARM.
I HAVE WAITED MANY YEARS TO SEE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE HEAVENLY MESSAGE. SOON THE KING WILL MAKE HIMSELF KNOWN TO US.
WITH YOUR ARMY YOU WILL BECOME HIS MOST POWERFUL ALLY. ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL WILL OBEY BEN-HUR.
GREAT ARMIES WILL MOVE AT YOUR COMMAND. NEXT TO THE NEW KING YOU WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FIGURE IN THE WORLD. ROME ITSELF WILL BOW BEFORE YOU.
LOOK YONDER THE JORDAN! A CROWD IS GATHERED ALONG THE BANK.
33


A WILD LOOKING, BUT STRIKING FIGURE DRAWS THE GAZE OF ALL EYES.
HE MUST BE THE MAN THEY CALL JOHN THE BAPTIST. HE IS POINTING AT SOME ONE. HEAR WHAT HE SAYS.
I AM THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD. MAKE STRAIGHT HIS PATH.
BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD. WHO TAKETH AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD. I BEAR WITNESS THAT THIS IS THE SON OF GOD
CAN THAT BE THE MESSIAH THAT HE POINTS OUT?
YES, I AM SURE!
IF IT IS, I AM SURE I HAVE SEEN HIM SOMEWHERE BEFORE TODAY.
BEN-HUR RECOGNIZES THE MAN POINTED OUT AS THE YOUNG NAZARENE WHO HAD OFFERED HIM WATER AS HE WAS BEING LED AWAY TO THE GALLEYS. BUT AS HE LEAPS DOWN THE SLOPE TO JOIN HIM, IRAS CALLS FOR HELP.
IT IS JESUS, THE SON OF THE CARPENTER, FROM NAZARETH!
MY FATHER HAS FALLEN! I BEG YOU, COME GIVE ME AID!
BUT WHILE BEN-HUR MINISTERED TO THE FALLEN BALTHASAR, THE LONELY FIGURE OF JESUS DISAPPEARED AROUND THE BEND IN THE RIVER JORDAN.
WOULD THAT YOUR FATHER HAD NOT FAINTED AT THAT MOMENT OR I COULD HAVE TALKED TO HIM WHO HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED AS OUR REDEEMER.
IT SEEMS STRANGE TO ME THAT A KING WOULD SELECT SO SHABBY A CREATURE AS JOHN THE BAPTIST TO BE HIS HERALD.
WE MUST WAIT AND SEE. YOUR FATHER SAYS JESUS COMES TO BE THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD. BUT SIMONIDES SAYS HE IS TO BE OUR KING. COULD NOT BOTH BE RIGHT? WHY SHOULD NOT OUR REDEEMER ALSO BE OUR KING?
HE IS NOT MY IDEA OF WHAT A KING SHOULD BE. ONLY A GIRL AS SIMPLE AS YOUR FRIEND ESTHER WOULD BELIEVE THAT THIS SON OF A CARPENTER WILL RULE THE WORLD.


FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS BEN-HUR CONTINUED TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN HIS ARMY IN THE DESOLATE COUNTRY NORTH OF JERUSALEM, BUT WHENEVER POSSIBLE HE SECRETLY JOINS THE CROWD THAT GATHERS WHENEVER JESUS, THE NAZARENE, APPROACHES. FINALLY HE IS READY TO REPORT WHAT HE HAS OBSERVED.
I AM MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT JESUS IS THE PROMISED LEADER THAT OUR PROPHETS HAVE FORETOLD. BUT IT MAY BE THAT HE IS MORE THAN THIS. DAY AFTER DAY HE HAS PERFORMED MIRACLES SUCH AS THE WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN.
FIVE THOUSEND MEN HAD GATHERED TO HEAR HIM AND WERE FAMISHED WITH HUNGER. JESUS TOOK FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES, AND UPON BLESSING THEM THEY BECAME MORE THAN ENOUGH TO FEED THE WHOLE MULTITUDE...
ONE DAY AS JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES WENT OUT OF JERICHO A BLIND MAN BEGGED HIM TO RESTORE HIS SIGHT. JESUS SPOKE BUT A FEW WORDS, AND THE MAN COULD SEE AGAIN---
IN THE TOWN OF BETHANY A MAN NAMED LAZARUS HAD DIED AND HAD LAIN FOR FOUR DAYS IN A TOMB. AFTER THE STONE HAD BEEN ROLLED AWAY, JESUS CRIED OUT IN A LOUD VOICE: "LAZARUS, COME FORTH!" AND THE MAN AROSE FROM THE DEAD.'
THESE MIRACLES ALL SHOW THAT THE TIME IS NEAR WHEN JESUS WILL REVEAL THAT HE IS TRULY THE SAVIOR OF ALL MANKIND— THE SON OF GOD SENT FOR OUR REDEMPTION.
THIS MAY WELL BE TRUE, BUT I STILL BELIEVE THAT FIRST HE SHALL BECOME OUR KING AND REIGN AS DID SOLOMON AND DAVID WITH MY ARMY HE SHALL LEAD US TO VICTORY OVER ROME.



FAR INTO THE EARLY SPRING NIGHT BEN-HUR AND HIS FRIENDS DEBATE WHEN AND HOW JESUS WILL PROCLAIM HIMSELF KING OF THE JEWS. THEN, JUST AS BEN-HUR IS ABOUT TO RETURN TO HIS ARMY, A MESSENGER ARRIVES.
JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES ARE ENTERING JERUSALEM THIS MORNING!
REJOICE! REJOICE! THIS CORONATION OF OUR KING MUST BE AT HAND. ALL THE PEOPLE WILL PROCLAIM HIM KING!
THUS IN THE MORNING A MULTITUDE FROM THE CITY POURS FORTH TO MEET JESUS AND HIS FOLLOWERS, WAVING PALM BRANCHES AS A SIGN OF VICTORY. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE TWO PROCESSIONS WILL COME TOGETHER BY THE CAVES WHERE THE LEPERS DWELL...
A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER AFFLICTED BY LEPROSY BELIEVE WITH SIMPLE FAITH ALL THEY HAVE HEARD OF THE MANY MIRACLES PERFORMED BY JESUS---
OH, DAUGHTER! HOW CAN WE GET NEAR TO HIM THROUGH SO GREAT A THRONG? THE PEOPLE WILL STONE US!
HE WILL PROTECT US, MOTHER. WE HAVE ONLY TO SPEAK TO HIM AND HE WILL BE MERCIFUL.
CAUGHT IN THE THRONG BEN-HUR CAN GET BUT A FLEETING GLIMPSE OF JESUS TALKING TO THE WOMEN, BUT HE CAN SEE THAT ANOTHER MIRACLE HAS BEEN PERFORMED. SUDDENLY, AS THE LAST VESTIGE OF THE DREAD DISEASE DISAPPEARS FROM THE TWO WOMEN, HE MAKES A STARTLING DISCOVERY.
MOTHER! AND MY SISTER, TIRZAH! NO WONDER I COULD NOT FIND THEM! THEY WERE AMONG THE LIVING DEAD -- BUT HE HAS RESTORED THEM!
MOTHER! TIRZAH!
MY SON!
BROTHER!



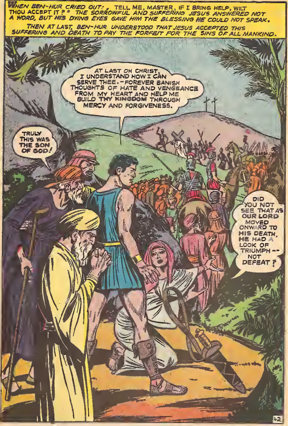
BEN-HUR HASTENED TO BRING HIS MOTHER AND SISTER TO SIMONIDES AND ESTHER WHO GAVE THEM ALL THE COMFORTS SO LONG DENIED THEM.
BUT BEN-HUR IS DISTURBED BY UGLY RUMORS WHICH ARE HEARD THROUGHOUT THE CITY.
I AM PUZZLED, MOTHER. THE PEOPLE FROM NAZARETH SAY THAT JESUS IS BUT THE SON OF A HUMBLE CARPENTER, BUT I AM CONVINCED HE IS DESTINED TO BE KING OF ALL ISRAEL.
YOU MUST BELIEVE, MY SON, WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN WITH YOUR OWN EYES.- HE IS MUCH MORE THAN A KING. HE IS OUR PROMISED REDEEMER AND HIS POWER IS FROM GOD HIMSELF!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW, MY SON? IS THIS TIME OF WAR? WHY DO YOU CARRY A SWORD?
I HAVE SWORN TO DEFEND HIM WITH MY LIFE, AND NOW HE NEEDS ME. I LIKE NOT THE REPORTS I HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE CITY CONCERNING PLOTS AGAINST HIM!
BEN-HUR!
ALL HIS ENEMIES ARE NOT ROMANS. EVEN NOW, THE SO-CALLED LEADERS OF OUR OWN JEWISH PEOPLE ARE SAID TO CONSPIRE AGAINST HIM.
HE HAS AROUSED THE FEARS OF THE POLITICIANS WHO ARE AFRAID HE WILL OFFEND THE ROMANS AND THE HIGH PRIESTS ARE JEALOUS OF HIS POWER OVER THE COMMON PEOPLE.
IT SEEMS STRANGE TO ME, DEAR BEN-HUR, THAT YOU CAN THINK THAT JESUS SEEKS REVENGE AND WORDLY POWER. DOES HE NOT TEACH LOVE AND MERCY AND TELL US THAT WE MUST FORGIVE OUR ENEMIES?
AH, YOU, SWEET ESTHER, WHO ARE SO GENTLE AND KIND YOURSELF, ALREADY LOVE OUR KING BECAUSE HE TEACHES THAT WHICH YOU DO MOST ESTEEM.


FIVE DAYS AFTER THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM, SIMONIDES TELLS BEN-HUR NEWS OF A SUDDEN TURN IN EVENTS.
THE CHRIST HAS NOT FULFILLED OUR HOPES. WE AND MANY THOUSANDS OF OUR JEWISH BRETHREN HAVE HAILED HIM AS OUR KING, BUT--- HE DOES NOTHING.
PERHAPS HE IS WAITING FOR A SIGN.
WHEN THE PEOPLE OFFERED HIM THE THRONE HE REFUSED IT. DAILY HE HAS BEEN IN THE TEMPLE PREACHING THAT MEN MUST BE MERCIFUL AND SEEK NOT VENGEANCE ON THEIR ENEMIES.
AND NOW, SINCE MANY PEOPLE NO LONGER ACCLAIM HIM THE PRIESTS AND POLITICIANS GROW BOLDER IN THEIR THREATS AGAINST HIM. I FEAR HIS LIFE IS NOW IN DANGER.
AS BEN-HUR FEARS FOR ALL HIS HOPES AND AMBITIONS, IRAS, THE EGYPTIAN GIRL IS QUICK TO SHOW HER TRUE CHARACTER AND ASSAILS HIM WITH BITTER MOCKERY.
FOOL! CAN YOU NOT SEE THAT NO ONE AS HUMBLE AND MEEK AS HE IS CAN EVER BE A KING? YOU WILL GAIN NOTHING BY FOLLOWING HIM!
I CAN BE A BETTER JUDGE OF THAT THAN YOU, IRAS. WHY ARE YOU NOT GUIDED BY YOUR FATHER'S FAITH?
REALIZING NOW THAT IRAS HAS ALL ALONG PLANNED TO USE HIM ONLY FOR HER OWN ADVANCEMENT, BEN-HUR'S LAST VESTIGE OF AFFECTION IS SWALLOWED IN THE DARK SHADOW OF HIS RIGHTEOUS ANGER.
KEEP YOUR KING OF THE JEWS, STUPID ONE! POWER AND FAME SHALL NEVER FALL WITHIN YOUR GRASP.
EVEN THOUGH HIS ENEMIES REVILE HIM AND HIS FRIENDS DESERT HIM I SHALL FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS. GET OUT OF MY SIGHT, YOU VAIN AND SELFISH CREATURE!
38


NEAR DAYBREAK THE NEXT MORNING, TWO OFFICERS OF BEN-HUR'S SECRET ARMY BRING A STARTLING REPORT OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.
WE STOOD GUARD OVER HIM ALL NIGHT AS YOU COMMANDED AND WE THOUGHT NOTHING WAS AMISS WHEN WE SAW A THRONG APPROACHING JESUS, BECAUSE JUDAS ESCARIOT, HIS FRIEND, WAS AT ITS HEAD.
DID NONE OF THE CROWD RUSH TO HIS SIDE WHEN JUDAS BETRAYED HIM AND THE CHIEF PRIEST ORDERED THE SOLDIERS TO SEIZE HIM ?
WHEN PETER, HIS CHIEF DISCIPLE, ROSE TO DEFEND HIM, HE SAID : " LAY DOWN THY SWORD, FOR WHOEVER SHALL LIVE BY THE SWORD SHALL PERISH BY THE SWORD "
THEN ALL HIS DISCIPLES FLED, LEAVING JESUS DESERTED AND ALONE.
ONLY WE OF ALL OUR ARMY STAND READY TO DO YOUR WILL. ALL THE REST SAY THEY WILL NOT FIGHT FOR A KING WHO WILL NOT DEFEND HIMSELF.
GO QUICKLY FOR MORE NEWS. I'LL FIGHT THE MOB ALONE IF NEED BE!
LATER ON THAT SAME FRIDAY MORNING BEN-HUR CATCHES THE SOUND OF HEAVY SHOD FEET HURRYING DOWN THE STREET.
IT IS MALLUCH! IS HE TOO THE BEARER OF BAD NEWS ?
THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS WOULD NOT DELAY. - THEY DEMANDED THAT JESUS BE TRIED AT ONCE, AND HE HAS ALREADY BEEN BEFORE THE COURT OF THE HIGH PRIESTS.


THEN HE WAS TAKEN BEFORE CAIPHAS, THE HIGH PRIEST, WHO ASKED HIM: "I ADJURE THEE BY THE LIVING GOD TO TELL US IF THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD"
THEN JESUS ANSWERED. "THOU HAST SAID IT, I AM"
THEN THE HIGH PRIEST RENT HIS GARMENT, SAYING:
"HE HAS BLASPHEMED! WHAT NEED HAVE WE OF MORE WITNESSES?"
BUT ONLY THE ROMAN GOVERNOR, PONTIUS PILATE, HAS THE POWER TO CONDENN A MAN TO DEATH!
THAT IS TRUE AND FOR A WHILE IT SEEMED THAT PILATE WOULD DO NOTHING BECAUSE HE SAID HE FOUND NO EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM. - FIRST PILATE HAD HIM SCOURGED.
AND THEN HE OFFERED TO FREE EITHER JESUS, OR BARABAS, THE MURDERER ---
--AND THE CROWD CHOSE BARABAS.
WHY COULD I NOT HAVE BEEN THERE TO HELP HIM!
FINALLY THE CHIEF PRIEST SAID TO PILATE: "IF THOU RELEASE THIS MAN, THOU ART NOT CAESAR'S FRIEND"
SO PILATE WASHED HIS HANDS, SAYING; "I AM FREE OF THE BLOOD OF THIS JUST MAN". - AND THE SCUM OF THE CITY, URGED ON BY THE POLITICIANS, SHOUTED: CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM!
I KNOW A PLACE WHERE THEY MUST PASS. HURRY, MALLUCH, IT MAY NOT BE TOO LATE FOR US TO SAVE HIM!


AS BEN-HUR AND HIS SMALL COMPANY OF FRIENDS STOOD STUNNED AND HORRIFIED BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, THE DREAD PROCESSION SLOWLY WOUND ITS WAY UP THE HARD AND TORTUROUS HILL.
LET HIM BUT SPEAK A SINGLE WORD OR GIVE A SIGN AND I ALONE CAN DRIVE THIS RABBLE OFF!
WILL YOU NOT YET BELIEVE, BEN-HUR, THAT THIS IS NO EARTHLY KING WHO SUFFERS HERE? BEHOLD THE SON OF GOD, OUR SAVIOR, WHO FROM THE FIRST FORETOLD THIS PAIN AND EVEN DEATH THAT ALL OF US MAY REGAIN OUR RIGHT TO LIVE WITH HIM IN PARADISE.
IT IS TOO TERRIBLE TO BEHOLD! SEE HOW HE IS BEATEN BY THE SOLDIERS AND SCOFFED AT BY THE CROWD.


WHEN BEN-HUR CRIED OUT: " TELL ME, MASTER, IF I BRING HELP, WILT THOU ACCEPT IT ? " THE SORROWFUL AND SUFFERING JESUS ANSWERED NOT A WORD, BUT HIS DYING EYES GAVE HIM THE BLESSING HE COULD NOT SPEAK.
THEN AT LAST, BEN-HUR UNDERSTOOD THAT JESUS ACCEPTED THIS SUFFERING AND DEATH TO PAY THE FORFEIT FOR THE SINS OF ALL MANKIND.
AT LAST OH CHRIST, I UNDERSTAND HOW I CAN SERVE THEE.--FOREVER BANISH THOUGHTS OF HATE AND VENGEANCE FROM MY HEART AND HELP ME BUILD THY KINGDOM THROUGH MERCY AND FORGIVENESS.
TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD!
DID YOU NOT SEE THAT AS OUR LORD MOVED ONWARD TO HIS DEATH, HE HAD A LOOK OF TRIUMPH -- NOT DEFEAT ?
42


ON THE DAWN OF THE THIRD DAY AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION -- THE SUNDAY WE NOW CALL EASTER -- BEN-HUR HEARD THE GLORIOUS MESSAGE THAT WILL CONTINUE TO THRILL THE WORLD UNTIL THE END OF TIME.
BEN-HUR, THROW OPEN THE DOOR!
LET US IN! WE HAVE WONDERFUL NEWS.- JESUS THE CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD!
IN A FEW MOMENTS BEN-HUR AND HIS ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD ARE GATHERED IN THE INNER COURT.
THAT WHICH HE PROMISED HAS COME ABOUT! OUR LORD HAS RISEN FROM THE DEAD. WE WERE AMONG THE MANY TO WHOM HE HAS APPEARED!
DID NOT OUR REDEEMER SAY: 'I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE'?
EVEN AS THE ROMAN SOLDIERS, SET TO GUARD THE TOMB, KEPT THEIR WATCH-- AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN APPEARED AND ROLLED BACK THE STONE OF THE TOMB.- TERRIFIED, THE SOLDIERS FLED AND BROUGHT WORD TO THE CITY.
LATER, MARY AND MAGDALENE VISITED THE TOMB AND FOUND THERE TWO ANGELS WHO SAID TO THEM: 'BE NOT AFRAID, YOU SEEK JESUS OF NAZARETH, WHO WAS CRUCIFIED. HE IS NOT THERE. HE IS RISEN. GO TELL HIS DISCIPLES AND PETER.'
TAKING TWO PIECES OF WOOD FROM THE GROUND, BEN-HUR FORMS THE SYMBOL WHICH FOREVER AFTER WILL BE THE SIGN OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS CHRIST---
I TOO ACCEPT THY CROSS WHICH WAS THY THRONE, OH CHRIST! I PLEDGE MYSELF AND ALL I HAVE THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW, THY PEACE!

What became of Ben-Hur's great Wealth

AT THE TIME of our Lord's death and resurrection, Ben Hur was still a young man and he was able to enjoy a quiet, peaceful life free of the turmoil and violence which filled his younger years. He and Esther were soon married and lived with their children in a villa at Misenum, not far from Rome.

Simonides, in spite of the crippling torture he had undergone years before, lived to be a very old man and continued to guard and improve the great fortune intrusted to his care. When Sheik Ilderim, whose horses Ben Hur had driven so well in the chariot race, was ready to die, he bequeathed his whole fortune to Ben Hur; and this great wealth was added to that which he already possessed.

Great sums were spent by Ben Hur to help the first struggling Christians at Antioch and the other parts of the Roman empire, and Ben Hur's charity to his brethren seemed almost boundless.

Then, when Ben Hur was about sixty years of age, news was received that the depraved emperor, Nero, who then ruled in Rome, had begun a violent persecution against the Christians, and they were forbidden to assemble in their own homes or to hold any form of religious service.

Simonides was quick to see the opportunity this offered for Ben Hur to further the work of God and said to him, "The Romans hold but two things sacred—the ashes of the dead and places of burial. Since we cannot build temples for the worship of the Lord in the open, then let us build them underground. To these hidden places we will carry the bodies of all who die, and then our living brethren can also meet there, and our chapels will be undisturbed among the tombs of the dead."

And with these words General Lew Wallace, the author, concludes his epic story of Ben Hur:

"If any of my readers, visiting Rome, will make a short journey to the catacomb of San Calixto, which is more ancient than that of San Sebastiano, he will see what became of the fortune of Ben Hur—and give him thanks. Out of that vast tomb Christianity issued to supersede the Caesars."*

*The great tunnels or caves in which the Christians buried their dead and hid from their persecutors came to be called catacombs, and many of them can be seen today in much the same condition as they were many centuries ago. It is estimated that over two million Christians were buried in this manner. The whole city of Rome was honeycombed by these tunnels and their total length is said to have exceeded seven hundred miles.

For nearly three hundred years the Christians were subjected to every form of barbarous persecution but finally the Emperor Constantine was converted, and Christianity swept victoriously over the whole of the Roman empire.

Famous **AUTHORS** *Illustrated*

JAMES MORIER:

THE WORD OF THE LAW




Famous AUTHORS Illustrated
Escape
from a French
WAR PRISON
by FREDERICK MARRYAT
AFTER BEING CAPTURED BY THE FRENCH DURING A BRITISH NAVAL RAID, MIDSHIPMAN SIMPLE AND HIS FRIEND, O'BRIEN, MAKE GOOD THEIR ESCAPE ONE DARK NIGHT FROM A PRISON IN THE ARDENNES . . .
WHEN GENDARMES PURSUED THEM, THEY TOOK REFUGE IN A TREE. AFTER THE OTHERS HAD PASSED, O'BRIEN SURPRISED A GENDARME WHO HAD LOITERED BEHIND THE REST . . .
O'BRIEN PUT ON THE GENDARME'S UNIFORM AND THEN PRETENDED THAT MIDSHIPMAN SIMPLE WAS HIS "PRISONER". THIS RUSE PERMITTED THEM TO PROCEED WITHOUT SUSPICION, AND THEY BEGAN TO HAVE HOPES OF CHRISTMAS DINNER HOME IN ENGLAND.
THEY WERE FED AND LODGED WELL ON THEIR JOURNEY, BUT SIMPLE DREW SO MUCH SYMPATHY FROM THE PEASANT GIRLS THAT MANY TRIED TO HELP HIM ESCAPE!
IN ORDER TO AVOID SUSPICION, O'BRIEN WAS OBLIGED TO OBEY AN OFFICER'S COMMAND TO LEAD HIS "CAPTIVE" TOWARDS THE NEAREST PRISON AT MALINES . . .


AT NIGHTFALL THEY GAVE THEIR UNWELCOME COMPANION THE SLIP, BUT THEY KNEW THAT THEREAFTER O'BRIEN'S DISGUISE COULD NOT HELP THEM...
BUT LUCK WAS STILL WITH THEM. FINDING THE FROZEN BODIES OF TWO BEGGARS WHO HAD SOUGHT ALMS BY PERFORMING ON THEIR STILTS, THE ENGLISH SAILORS DONNED THEIR RAGS AND SET FORTH ONCE AGAIN - THIS TIME DISGUISED AS ACROBATS.
STILL RELYING ON THEIR WITS, SIMPLE AND O'BRIEN ACCEPTED ALMS AS THEY PASSED THROUGH GARRISONED TOWNS EN ROUTE TO THE ENGLISH CHANNEL...
ESCAPING OVER THE FRENCH BORDER, THE FUGITIVES HAILED A SMALL BOAT BOUND FOR A DUTCH SEAPORT...
AFTER TWO STORM-TOSSED DAYS ABOARD THE BOAT, THEY WERE PICKED UP BY A BRITISH CUTTER. THE REWARD OF THEIR HARDY ADVENTURE AWAITED THEM - CHRISTMAS DINNER IN ENGLAND!

The Cheating of Hadschi Stavros

By Edmond About

Adapted from the famous French novel "The King of the Mountains"



The good people of Athens were so afraid of Hadschi Stavros, the so-called King of the Mountains, that they hardly dared to stroll beyond the streets of the suburbs. Indeed, several times the Hadschi bands had captured tourists who were on their way to visit the Pentelikon.

Despite their fear, however, the people took a certain pride in this eminent bandit and fellow-citizen, and everybody had tales to tell of Hadschi Stavros, the unconquerable, the terrible, the scourge of Greece and the terror of Greek gendarmes and soldiers.

The trade of banditry continued so brisk that Stavros soon had to study finance. He made a visit to France and England and learned the art of investment and speculation—a science that appealed to him as being closely related to his own.

Naturally, in the course of the extensive and often hurried enterprises in which he continued to engage after his return to Greece, the King of the Mountains found it necessary to be a bit firm now and then. If a man was stupidly obstinate about telling where he had hidden his money, Stavros was obliged, as a matter of principle, to roast him more or less thoroughly over a fire. When he held persons for ransom, the only way which he could prevent the prisoners' careless or selfishly calculating relatives from burdening him indefinitely with the support of the captured ones, was to send little consignments of fingers or ears into town as a hint for hurrying the money.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Athens only shrugged its collective and individual shoulders when one day the King of the Mountains captured an enormously rich English woman and her daughter—Mrs. and Miss Simons of London.

Everybody, even the police, smiled when the indignant lady sent letters to the government (which Hadschi transmitted most courteously) demanding that an army be sent into the mountain immediately to rescue her. Everybody wondered how much ransom the King of the Mountains would demand

The enthusiasm was great, therefore, when it became known that the English woman's ransom had been fixed at the unbelievable sum of 100,000 francs. Wilder still was the excitement when after about nineteen days it became known that the King's soft promises of amputations and other little tortures had so stimulated the prosaic blood of her English relatives that they had cabled the money.

Mrs. Simons and her daughter Mary Ann were received with jubilation and almost pomp when they rode into Athens on the mules which the great-hearted Hadschi Stavros had lent to them after the ransom (in gold) had been safely paid into his hands. But it was noticed that Mrs. Simons and her daughter had strange, reserved, grim smiles.

About a month after they had sailed from Greece and were safely back in London the reason for those strange smiles became known.

All Athens was shocked by the revelation. As for Hadschi Stavros, the King of the Mountains, he lay in his tent and wept. He had received a letter from the London bank where he had for years deposited his ill-gotten gains, that the sum of 100,000 francs had been deducted from his personal savings. It appears that Mrs. Simons' husband was the president of the bank.

STORIES BY *Famous* AUTHORS *Illustrated*

BEN HUR contains the most dramatic and exciting scenes in any book written by an American author—the great chariot race, slavery on the galleys, the tomb of the lepers and many others. This story is an amazing combination of fiction and the most significant and solemn events in the life and death of our Lord.

Featured **in this Issue**

BEN HUR

BY GENERAL LEW WALLACE



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